

124:35
ms

THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

88XNFHXY *****CAR-RT LOT#*C019
#0000 2910 90978
005 DTM
SOUTHERN BAPT HISTORICAL SOC 5958 P1
901 COMMERCE ST STE 401
NASHVILLE TN 37203-3620
SEP 16 2010

NCE 1877
R 9, 2010
VOL. 134
No. 35

Lottie church pastor in China killed

PENGLAI, China (BP and local reports) — A Chinese pastor and his wife were slain Aug. 31 at Penglai Christian Church in Pengali, China, where Lottie Moon, an icon of Southern Baptist mission work, served in the early 1900s.

Pastor Qin Jia Ye and his wife Hong En He, both in their 80s, were killed in the church's office. A suspect in the murders, a 40-year-old former church member, was arrested within an hour of the early morning incident.

Chinese newspaper accounts state that the suspect entered the church office carrying an axe and struck the pastor and his wife, killing them both. No other details of the crime were available.

The couple's violent death is a shock to many, both in China and the United States. The church was closed after communists came to power at the end of World War II, reopening in 1988 with only 20 people.

Today, there are 3,600 members. Qin reported 300 baptisms several years in a row.

The church eventually outgrew Moon's original structure and built a modern 1,500-seat sanctuary next to it with the help of Johnson Ferry Church in Marietta, Ga.

"From the moment I met Pastor Qin, I could sense a Christ-like spirit," said Bryant Wright, Johnson Ferry Church's senior pastor and current Southern Baptist Convention president. "We are incredibly saddened by this tragic event, but we know one of the Lord's faithful servants is with Him forever in Heaven."

Qin graciously acted as tour guide for a large number of Southern Baptist leaders passing through Penglai who wanted to connect with the community where Moon served.

Wanda S. Lee, executive director-treasurer of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention in Birmingham, visited the church during a 1997 China tour. In spite

of numerous church responsibilities, Qin and his wife welcomed the group warmly, Lee said, and it was obvious they were well-loved and respected.

"We are deeply grieved at the news of [the] death" of Qin and his wife, Lee said. "It is a great loss to the Christian community."

Candace McIntosh, executive director of Alabama WMU in Montgomery, took seven college students to China in 2008 to experience firsthand the history and work of Southern Baptists. Penglai Christian Church was a stop on the tour.

McIntosh remembers admiring Qin's humble and quiet strength as he prepared for worship, as well as his ability to state the message clearly for all to understand. After the service, Qin spent a great deal of time talking with the team of young women about Moon's legacy.

"He was so encouraged that younger women were there, learning about the history of Lottie Moon and the Chinese church," McIntosh recalled. "I know the legacy of Lottie Moon will live on, but one of its greatest communicators is no longer with us. I know Qin's legacy will live on, too."

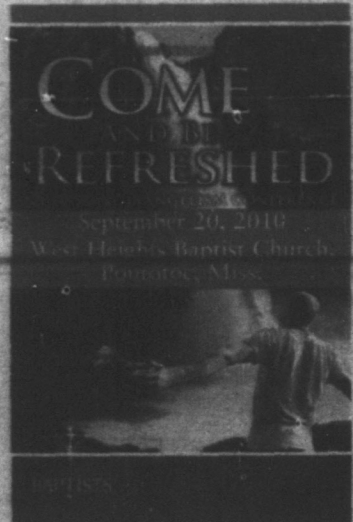
Lottie Moon was the first single woman appointed as a missionary by the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention (now called the International Mission Board). She served in China from



Qin Jia Ye

1873 until her death in 1912. She died of malnutrition after giving up her meager rations and salary to help the starving Chinese people.

Having first suggested that Southern Baptists create an offering for foreign missions to coincide with the Christmas season, the offering was begun in 1888 and named in her honor in 1918. The Lottie Moon Offering for International Missions is now one of the largest missions offerings in the Christian faith.



Growing Churches Conference attracts 784 attendees

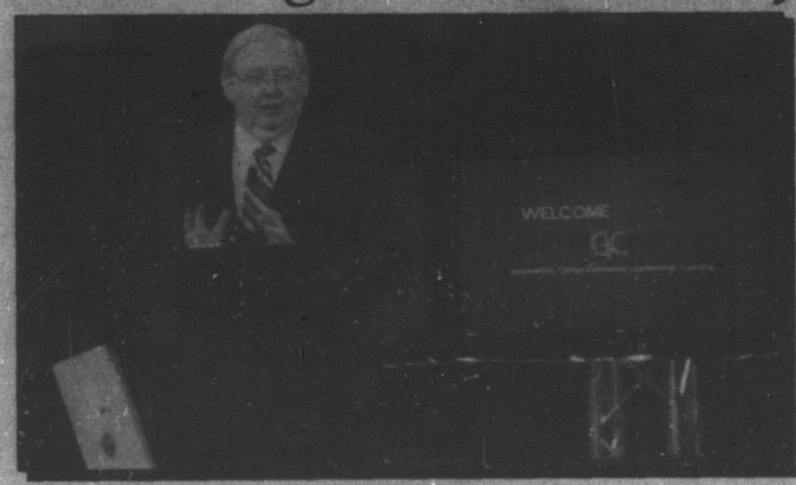
BRANDON, Ms. (Special) — The 2010 Growing Churches Conference was held July 30-31 at Crossgates Church, Brandon. The event, sponsored as a joint venture by the Discipleship and Family Ministries (DFM) Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and Copiah, Lauderdale, Leake, Metro, Neshoba, Newton, Rankin (host), Scott, Simpson, Smith, Warren, and Yazoo associations, is designed to equip leaders in the various churches.

Fifty-five leaders facilitated 150 conferences, including ministries such as preschool/children, students, adult, women's, men and deacons, music, evangelism, Sunday School and discipleship, church growth, pastor/staff, Cover Mississippi With Prayer, WMU, and Hispanic.

Friday offered a large group worship experience with Mickey Dalrymple, Fairview Church, Columbus, and Lavon Gray, First Church, Jackson, leading worship. There was one breakout session Friday night and three more Saturday morning.

Steve Jackson, pastor, McLaurin Heights Church, Pearl, was chairman of the steering committee. Other committee members included Charles Wallace (Copiah), John Temple (Lauderdale), Joe Abel (Leake), Jamie Holden (Metro), Ray Spence (Neshoba), Allen Stephens and Diane Thompson (Rankin), Gary Wyatt (Scott), Johnny Sykes (Simpson), and Kevin Hurt (Warren/Yazoo).

The conference attracted 784 participants and faculty.



Dalrymple

Vietnam communists hit Christians hard

WASHINGTON (BP) — Government-perpetrated violence against a Catholic village in Vietnam has highlighted a series of human rights abuses in the communist nation, and three U.S. congressmen are calling on the United Nations to intervene.

"A few months ago during a religious funeral procession, Vietnamese authorities and riot police disrupted that sad and solemn occasion, shooting tear gas and rubber bullets into the crowd, beating mourners with batons and electric rods," Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., said at a hearing of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission in August.

"More than 100 were injured, dozens were arrested, and several remain in custody and have reportedly been severely beaten and tortured. At least two innocent people have been murdered by the Vietnamese police," Smith said.

"The Con Dau tragedy," Smith said, "is unfortunately not an isolated incident." Property disputes between the government and the Catholic church continue to lead to harassment, property destruction and violence," Smith said, referring to a report by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

"In recent years, the Vietnamese government has stepped up its persecution of Catholic believers, bulldozing churches, dismantling crucifixes and wreaking havoc on peaceful prayer vigils," Smith said.

Persecution is not limited to Catholics, though, as Smith had a list of nearly 300 Montagnard political and religious prisoners. In January, the Vietnamese government sentenced two Montagnard Christians to nine and 12 years imprisonment for

organizing a house church, and others have been arrested in connection with house churches, Smith said.

"The arrests were accompanied by beatings and torture by electroshock devices," the congressman said. "We must not forget the sufferings of Khmer Krom Buddhists, Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and others. The sad reality is that the Vietnamese government persecutes any religious group that does not submit to government control."

The violence in the 80-year-old Catholic village of Con Dau in central Vietnam reportedly stemmed from a government directive for residents to abandon the village to make way for the construction of a resort.

International Christian Concern, a Washington-based watchdog group, reported that when Con Dau residents refused to leave, water irrigation was shut off to their rice fields, stopping the main source of income and food.

In May, police attacked the funeral procession, beating more than 60 people, including a pregnant woman who was struck in the stomach until she had a miscarriage, ICC said.

One of the funeral procession leaders later was confronted by police in his home, where they beat him for about four hours and then released him. He died the next day, ICC said. Eight people remain in police custody and are awaiting trial.

"The people of Con Dau are living in desperate fear and confusion," Thang Nguyen, executive director of an organization representing Con Dau victims, told ICC. "Hundreds of residents have been fined, and many have escaped to Thailand."

Smith, along with Rep. Joseph Cao, R-La., and Frank Wolf, R-Va., introduced a House resolution in July calling for the United Nations to appoint a special investigator to probe "ongoing and serious human rights violations in Vietnam." In August, the Lantos Commission met in emergency session to address the "brutal murders and systematic treatment of Catholics in Con Dau."

"The Vietnamese government justifies this violence, torture and murder because the villagers of Con Dau had previously been ordered, some through coercion, to leave their village, property, church, century-old cemetery, their religious heritage, and to forgo equitable compensation in order to make way for a new 'green' resort," Smith said at the hearing. "Nothing, however, not even governmental orders, grant license for government-sanctioned murder and other human rights abuses."

The U.S. Department of State declined to testify before the Lantos Commission, and the U.S. ambassador to Vietnam characterized the Con Dau incident as a land dispute and refused to get involved.

Logan Maurer, a spokesman for International Christian Concern, told BP he has publicized about 10 different incidents of persecution in Vietnam during the past few months.

"In some cases, especially in Southeast Asia, religious persecution becomes a gray area. We also work extensively in Burma, where often there are mixed motives for why a particular village is attacked," Maurer said. "Is it because they're Christian? Well, partially. Is it because they're an ethnic minority? Partially."

"I think the same thing happens in Vietnam where you have a whole village that's Catholic. One hundred percent of it was Catholic," he said of Con Dau.

Maurer explained that local government officials in Vietnam generally align Christianity with the western world and democracy, which is still seen as an enemy in Vietnam on a local level.

"As far as the official gov-

ernment Vietnamese position, that's different, but local government officials do not take kindly to Christians and never have. We have documented many cases of government officials saying Christianity is the enemy. So here it's mixed motives as best we can figure out," Maurer said.

"They wanted to build a resort there, and they could have picked a different village but they chose the one on purpose that was Catholic because it represents multiple minorities — minority religion, minority also in terms of people that can't fight back. If they go seek government help, the government is not going to help them."

A Christian volunteer who has visited Vietnam five times in the past decade told Baptist Press the Con Dau incident illustrates the way the Vietnamese government responds to any kind of dissent.

"In our country, and in modern democracies, there are methods for resolving disputes with the government, taking them to court, trying to work through the mediation process," the volunteer, who did not want to be identified, said. "In Vietnam there is no such thing. It is the government's will or there will be violence."

Vietnam's constitution includes a provision for religious liberty, but the volunteer said that only goes as far as the communal will of the people, which is monopolized by the Communist Party.

"So when the Communist Party says you can't build a church there or you can't worship this way, those who say, 'Well, I have religious freedom,' are essentially trumped by the constitution that says it's the will of the people, not individual liberty that's important," the volunteer said.

The government in Vietnam has made efforts during the past 15 years to open up the country to economic development, and with that has come an influx of some western values and a lot of Christians doing work there, the volunteer said.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND
FRONT PAGE

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

SEPTEMBER 9, 2010

VOL. 134

No. 35



YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Report questioned

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (BP) — A report of three Christian aid workers being killed by the Taliban in Pakistan has yet to be confirmed and could be false. Compass Direct reported Aug. 27 that the aid workers — supposedly in the country to assist in flood relief — were killed after their vehicle was attacked and they were kidnapped Aug. 23. Compass Direct quoted Pakistan Swat District Coordination Officer Atif-ur-Rehman, who claimed the bodies were recovered Aug. 25. The organization that employed the workers requested that the organization's name and the workers' names be withheld, Compass reported, "for security reasons." Compass said the military sources "who withheld news of the deaths from electronic and print media to avoid panicking other relief workers granted permission to Compass to publish it in limited form." BosNewsLife, another news service that reports on Christian persecution, also ran a story quoting Rehman as saying three workers were killed. The U.S. embassy in Pakistan is denying it has received any bodies, and the Pakistani government and army also have not confirmed the report, CNSNews.com reported Sept. 2. "To be clear, the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad has not been notified of the kidnapping or murder of any American citizens, including relief workers," U.S. Embassy spokesman Richard Snelsire told CNSNews in an e-mail. Compass quotes Rizwan Paul, president of the advocacy organization Life for All, as saying the bodies had been sent to Islamabad "under the supervision of the Pakistan Army." Paul stood by the story. "Pakistan military and other sources are trying their best to stop the news from getting out," Paul told CNSNews.com.

Looking back

10 years ago

A record Mississippi Cooperative Program budget of \$30,047,997, for 2001 will be proposed to messengers when the 2000 Mississippi Baptist Convention convenes Oct. 31 – Nov. 1 at First Church, Jackson.

20 years ago

Guy Henderson, Mississippi Baptists' director of evangelism since 1981, is tapped to succeed Don McGregor as editor of The Baptist Record. McGregor will retire on Dec. 31 after more than 16 years at the helm of the weekly journal of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

50 years ago

Owen Cooper, Yazoo City, is one of the group of the nation's outstanding financial leaders who will serve on the newly created Church Loans Advisory Committee at the Home Mission Board.

Analysis: Mixed martial arts amounts to violence porn

By Adam P. Groza
Correspondent

How should we as Baptists regard the growing popularity of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) and the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC)? Simply put, we should hate it.

Psalms 11:5 says, "The LORD examines the righteous and the wicked. He hates the lover of violence." This is a hard verse for at least two reasons. First, it does not say that God simply hates violence but rather, that God hates those who love violence. Second, it confronts our culture's lust for violence, a lust which many Christians indulge rather than reject.

UFC and MMA comprise a lucrative mainstream business of entertainment violence. Gate revenue for UFC fights in 2007 totaled \$2.8 million and \$200 million for pay-per-view. An international phenomenon, one UFC fight in Dublin sold all 10,000 seats in two weeks.

Surprisingly, an estimated one-third of fans are female. UFC and MMA fighters have been featured on mainstream shows such as 60 Minutes and Dr. Phil, and on ESPN.

What exactly are people paying to see? MMA and UFC offer a simple formula. Two people are put in an enclosed



Groza

or confined space, usually an octagon cage, and fight until one of them is deemed (by the referee) too injured to continue or "taps out," meaning he just can't take any more beating.

Fighters wear minimally padded gloves which lead to more blood, and those bloody images are then used to market the sport. Those who pay to see the fights also pay to see "octagon girls," scantily clad eye-candy between bouts.

MMA and UFC are far from a harmless sport. They are a sinful amalgam of blood lust and female objectification that reflects our culture's growing desensitization to the inherent value of human life.

Sadly, some evangelical churches are embracing the violence of MMA and UFC. One Florida church used an octagon stage design. I can't imagine a church using a bar as a stage design, but apparently while it's wrong to imbibe alcohol, it's OK to imbibe violence.

Canyon Creek Church in Lynwood, Wa., even held a church event for UFC 100, where for only \$10 a person you could watch the fights live on pay-per-view. Pastor Brandon Beals is referred to on the church's website as "the fight pastor" and is quoted as calling it "very fan-friendly."

Does he think it conflicts with Scripture? "If it was still no-holds barred, if it was underground or illegal, then yes. But this is legal and sanctioned. It's got rules. You're talking about stellar athletes, so I don't believe it does at all."

UFC and MMA amounts to violence porn, a term which has been applied to movies with wanton violence such as

SAW, where violence is not part of the plot but is the attraction. Violence for violence's sake, as opposed to instrumental or redeeming violence, desensitizes the viewer to the graphic horror of watching two people pummel each other for the sake of entertainment. UFC and MMA offer exactly the kind of violence condemned in Psalm 11:5.

Ezekiel 7:23 decries, "...the city is full of violence." Why are Christians supporting violence in the city?

The Bible does not condemn all acts of violence. The Father sacrificing the Son is redemptive, like sacrificing oneself in defense of some innocent person or one's country. In contrast, caged fighting is violence for the sake of violence and profit and as a vehicle for lust. In Genesis 6:13, God announces His plan to destroy all flesh "because the earth is filled with violence."

Some things, such as the love of violence, Christians simply cannot redeem.

No doubt Christian MMA and UFC fans would argue that their sport leads to evangelistic opportunities. This same argument is made by those who drink alcohol at bars: You get the chance to witness.

Christians are not pragmatists, even when it comes to evangelism. God-honoring evangelism doesn't adopt methods or practices that compromise holiness. Noble intentions cannot justify an unholy fellowship of light and darkness.

Baptists believe the Bible should inform every aspect of life. The Bible teaches that sin brought death, suffering,

and violence to creation. Violence is something we may justly tolerate but never celebrate. A soldier or policeman may reluctantly use violence as a last resort.

In section XVI of the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message (BFM) it says that Baptists must seek peace. Paying for entertainment violence is the opposite of seeking peace and violates the Scriptures reflected in the BFM.

Baptists oppose alcohol because it leads to drunkenness and because of its degenerative impact on culture, being linked to abuse and other societal ills. UFC and MMA market violent video games and UFC branded clothing to youth.

Another sign of the barbaric effect on culture is that women are now fighting in UFC and MMA styled matches.

Early Christians were objects of violent persecution, being thrown into Roman coliseums for the amusement of the masses. Two thousand years later, some Christians are now in the stands, cheering and supporting the blood and violence. Christians must avoid any support or association with the entertainment violence of MMA and UFC.

We must not envy the men of violence or choose any of their ways (Proverbs 3:31).

Have we forgotten the words of Christ? Blessed are the peacemakers.

Groza is vice-president of enrollment and student services at Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, Ca. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

So. Baptist worker saves pigs from banishment by Thai villagers

BANGKOK (BP) — They needed pigs that don't stink.

At a meeting in rural Thailand, Mark Patenaude heard the pig farmers' dilemma. They were being forced to move their smelly livestock a mile outside their village, but some farmers were too poor or too old to do so.

Patenaude spoke up. "I know of a method to raise pigs that don't produce any smell," the Southern Baptist worker from Minnesota announced. "Is anybody interested in that?"

Hands shot up all over the room. Patenaude hoped this enthusiasm would later lead to openness to the Gospel. He was wrong.

Patenaude and his wife Lisa came to this unreached village in 2003 with a plan. Having worked previously on agricultural development projects in Thailand, they planned to use that knowledge to help improve the community. In turn, they hoped that would give them an opening to talk about Jesus in a place with no known believers.

"We wanted to go into new territory, be pioneer evangelists, and serve the community," Patenaude said. "God would provide new believers, we would be able to disciple them, and we would work with them to come up with a model of church that would thrive in a rural setting."

Things went well at first. The Patenaudes were welcomed by the villagers, who invited them to attend a government-sponsored development committee in the district.

"That was good for me, because I got to hear all the issues that were going on in different villages," Patenaude said.

One of those issues was the forced relocation of pig farms. Repelled by the stench, some villagers believed the animals were unsanitary and wanted them out. Patenaude seized the opportunity with an inventive, yet little known, solution: Make the pigs not stink.

Developed in South Korea, the method — Korean Natural Farming — involves raising pigs on deep organic bedding filled with local microorganisms that rapidly break down the pigs' droppings.

"It just eliminates the smell associated with raising animals in captivity," Patenaude said. "That was amazing to me, because it worked. Who would have ever thought that pigs don't stink?"

The Thai government provided money for 10 people from the community to go with Patenaude to a training facility where they learned to implement the method. "I was very well received, and everybody came to know me as the stink-free pig guy," he said.

He worked with a Thai farmer who set up a demonstration pig pen to test the technique. The farmer became the local expert, training other villagers. Patenaude's work earned him great respect among members of the community, who saw he truly cared for their needs.

Energized by the acceptance he gained, he sprang into sharing the Gospel — and slammed into a wall. "Every time I told my testimony, I could see their eyes start to glaze over," he recalled. "I could just see them turn off."

"I just couldn't get it," Patenaude said. "Why was what God did in my life and the transformation He offers everybody not being accepted or even seen as desirable by the people I was talking to?"



ODORLESS PIGS? — A Thai farmer (second from right) that Mark Patenaude taught to be an expert in odorless pig farming trains other farmers in the method. Using a deep organic bedding eliminates the smell associated with raising animals in captivity. (BP photo)

For five years, he and Lisa labored to break through with the Gospel, constantly re-evaluating their methods. They partnered with Thai Christians, who themselves were shocked by the difficulty of evangelizing the community.

"...Jesus is weeping over His lost sheep, His people that don't know or receive Him," Patenaude said. "I think that really captures how we also felt."

After knocking on so many doors that wouldn't open, the Patenaudes finally felt God leading them to a new strategic role that required close work

with Thai churches in a nearby city. The Patenaudes still visit the village, and they have seen some adults move toward a greater understanding of God. The couple trust the seeds planted in the hard spiritual soil will someday grow.

"We have to trust God in His leadership, no matter what task He gives us, and we have to be faithful to that, even when it is frustrating and we can't see the results," Patenaude said. "I think we knew that, but He let us experience it."

BIBLIOCIPHER

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
© 2005

LSO AP XLBO YT YAPF
LEE, BQ LSI FLS HBEE
NTFP LQYPW FP, EPY ABF
OPSJ ABFXPEQ, LSO YLDP
ZU ABX NWTXX OLBEJ,
LSO QTEETH FP.

EZDP SBSP: YHPSYJ-
YAWPP

Clue: X = S

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Romans Eight: Eleven

TOO WONDERFUL FOR WORDS

Some experiences, people, and events are just too wonderful for words. You may not see them or notice them everyday, and it is possible that you can overlook some of them. As summer was flowing into fall, I was out walking just at sunrise on a warm and wonderful Saturday morning. I was at the edge of some woods watching to see if I could see any deer grazing at that time of the morning. Suddenly and almost shockingly, there in neck deep grass was a doe watching my every move and listening for anything that would cause her to run. I froze in my tracks too. There we were 15-20 yards apart staring at each other. I certainly did not want to scare her and was not out to harm her so I just quietly stood there looking at her and she did the same. For whatever reason fear must have overcome her and she turned and bolted away from me.

It was only at that time that two beautiful fawns reacted and ran away with her. They were about half-grown and appeared to be twins. They were running through the grass to get to the woods with their mother. I watched the three of them as they danced, darted away, and finally disappeared. I thought how in this world do I describe what I just saw. Even with a movie camera in hand, it would have been impossible to catch what I had seen and heard. As she turned to run she snorted, which I am assuming was deer language for kids run for your life and they did.

The beauty of it all and the wonder of the moment will stay with me for a long, long time. There are no words that could describe those moments, though probably several thousand hunters across the state could tell the same story. The moment was too wonderful for words, and so while it may not be captured by a video or verbiage, the picture is there and the experience is mine. However, if we are alive and alert, sensitive and seeking, we can see those magnificent, indescribable moments again and again in our lives. Let me point out just a handful of them in your walk with the Lord.

At times, worship is too wonderful for words. Just to mention the word worship brings to many of our minds



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

the imageries of preaching, singing, testimonies, or taking an offering—but while preaching is vitally important and music is indispensable, I am not talking about those moments though I trust they are meaningful to you. I am talking about the kind of moments week after week when we come together to meet with the Lord that may not even be planned, or at least not orchestrated. Suddenly, the moment is there and there is no way that you can describe it.

During the summer, I was speaking on Wednesday night at my home church. I had been looking forward to being with people I knew and loved, sharing a word with them, and leading in a moment of worship. On that particular night, everything was transformed in a different way. During the spring and summer, one of the fine deacons at our church had experienced surgery, intensive care, rehab, and wondered if he would ever go home or come to church. Ed Dedeaux had been prayed for, loved, supported, and was determined to get back. I did not know and most of the people who were there that night had no idea that he was going to come back to church for the first time in months on that Wednesday night. While we were making our way into the chapel, the door opened and there being brought into the church in his wheelchair was Ed Dedeaux. I could not believe what I was seeing.

As others began to see and hear, they were astounded and thrilled. As soon as the door opened to the chapel and as he was being wheeled in, people started clapping. They could not help it. They just celebrated. At the time, Ed was not back on his feet, but he was back in church. It was just a moment that rippled through the congregation. I doubt that anyone who was there that night could tell you anything that was sung, and I am pretty sure that nobody remembers anything that I said. However, it will never be forgotten that

Ed was there that night after his long road to recovery. It was a moment too wonderful for words.

Here is a take away or hold tightly kind of thought about our worship. It is a meeting with God, but it is also designed by God to be a meeting with each other. It is not so much about what is sung or said, but it is about showing up to meet with God. There are people who are away from the Lord that their return would make such a difference. There are people who walk closely with God and their presence makes a difference in others. When you are there, it means something and when you are not there it also means something, but it is not good. Show up! For many people, it may be a moment too wonderful for words.

When you think about it, sharing your witness of Christ with someone else can be a moment too wonderful for words. Through the years, I have had the wonderful privilege of sharing the Lord with men, women, boys, and girls and to see so many people trust Jesus and genuinely have a life transforming experience. I did not save them, but I did have the wonderful privilege of being there and seeing God do a wonderful work in their heart. Oftentimes, I have had that privilege of sharing a witness with them and seeing them respond to the Good News of Jesus.

Now years later, even decades later, there are people that I see and while they have grown up, gone to school, and

done many things, the one moment that resounds the most in my heart is when they trusted Jesus and I was blessed to be there. Maybe you have had that moment, but if you have not shared your testimony with others—if you have not sought to share with them the living, loving Lord Jesus, you need to do that even today. In fact, it can mean eternity is different and every time you see them may be a wonderful moment that is too wonderful for words.

Finally, there are times when the Word of God is just too wonderful for words. That may sound strange but if you consistently read the Word of God, study God's book, and listen to what He says, invariably there will be those magnificent moments when you have an experience where it seems as though there is a quiet explosion that takes place in your heart as God reveals His truth to you. If you do not have a regular, on-going time with God around His Word and listen to what He says, you may excuse yourself from ever reading the Bible thinking that you do not understand it. It is an old book that really does not mean anything to me. Accept the challenge. Take the Gospel according to John, and start reading it through. Watch and listen as you hear the things that Jesus said and the things that others said about Him. Open your heart and let God speak to you. See what might happen. The Bible itself says that it is the Word of God and that it is alive and well, reaching down into the inner part of our souls. It will happen to you if you will allow God to speak to you. So take His Word and pay close attention to it. I promise you in time and oftentimes you will have an encounter with the Lord that is too wonderful for words.

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

39th Annual CHURCH LIBRARY MINISTRY CONFERENCE

October 1-2 • First Baptist Church, Natchez
SPECIAL GUESTS: Robin Carroll & Patti Hill

For more information call:
1-800-748-1651, ext. 378

Beth Moore Simulcast

Hosted by
Eastside Baptist Church
Belzoni, MS

CHICAGO 2010 simulcast
LIVING PROOF LIVE
(With Mary Evans)

Living Proof Live Simulcast brings beloved teacher Beth Moore and worship leader Travis Cottrell via simulcast from the windy city of Chicago directly to the women in your community! Enjoy the perfect mix of biblically sound teaching and worship from the comfort of your home church.

September 18, 2010

8:30 AM until 4:30 PM
Tickets \$10.00
Lunch will be provided

For tickets or more information 662.247.3844
Church Office Hours M-F 8-12

JUST FOR THE RECORD



12. Belden Church, Belden



13. First Church, Tupelo



14. Howard ordination

LIFEWAY WOMEN EVENTS

Because you are living proof of God's love.

LIVING PROOF LIVE
simulcast featuring Beth Moore

September 18, 2010
Doors Open at 8:30 AM
Cost: \$25.00 per person

Contact Wynndale Baptist Church, at 601-371-2429 for more information

www.lifeway.com/women

Lifeway Women

9. The Mississippi Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Alumni luncheon will be Oct. 26, First Church, Jackson. Tickets are \$10 and can be ordered from Paul Blanchard, P.O. Box 867, Louisville, MS 39339. Please order tickets as soon as possible.

10. Eureka Church, Lena, will host a gospel singing Sept. 11, 11 a.m., with food plates, silent auction, and drawing. Southern Heritage gospel group at 6 p.m.

11. Salem Heights Church, Laurel, is hosting a Beth Moore simulcast Sept. 18. Free; lunch provided. Must pre-register for lunch; call (601) 763-7571.

12. Belden Church, Belden, held a deacon ordination service Aug. 29. Shown are Brad Bauer, Richard Stephenson, Adam Archer, and pastor Jim Holcomb.

13. First Church, Tupelo, celebrated its 160th anniversary Aug. 22 with a reception in the fellowship hall. A timeline of major events and a historical display were set up for viewing. Chad Grayson, pastor.

14. Parkview Church, Greenville, ordained Neil Howard as deacon Aug. 29.

15. New Henleyfield Church, Pearl River County, held a deacon ordination Aug. 29. Shown are Rusty Walker and his wife Stephanie.

16. First Church, Vardaman, honored pastor Dale Easley and his wife Doug for 25 years of service at the church with a surprise service and meal. Shown are the Easleys.

17. Improve Church, Columbia, honored Mike Bennett for three years of service as minister of music. Shown are pastor Darel Daniels, Bennett, and Matt Robinson.

18. Concord Church, Pelahatchie, ordained Billy Thompson as deacon Aug. 15. Shown are the participants.



15. Walker ordination



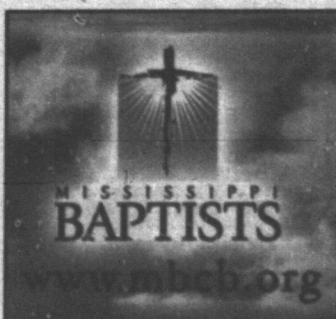
16. The Easleys



17. Improve Church, Columbia



18. Concord Church, Pelahatchie



JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. First Church Pearl and Park Place Church, Brandon



2. Rocky Point Church, Leake Association



3. Liberty Church, Newton County



4. Friendship Church, Brookhaven

1. The youth of First Church, Pearl, and Park Place Church, Brandon, participated in a mission trip to Atlanta to work with Pastor Seven and his homeless mission church. First Church Pearl voted to donate their church bus to the mission, and several students donated their shoes to the mission. Shown are the participants.

2. Rocky Point Church, Leake Association, recognized their RAs for their accomplishments during the year. Shown are Tucker Cain, Nick Jenkins, and Gregory White along with leaders Craig Jenkins and Travis Cain.

3. Liberty Church, Newton County, honored Marty & Patsy Harper and Gary & Joyce Johnson Aug 15 with a luncheon for their service as associate pastors while pastor Hal Ethridge was serving with the 186th Civil Engineer Squadron Jan. - Aug., 2010. Also honored at the luncheon was Ruby Boutwell, who has served as music director for 30 years. Shown are Joyce and Gary Johnson, Boutwell, and Marty and Patsy Harper.

4. Friendship Church, Brookhaven, held a baby dedication Mother's Day. Shown are Shannon and Stephanie Smith with son, Sage; Chase and Michelle Eady with son, Mason; Karsten and Cassie Case with son, Kade; and David and Stacia Carpenter with daughter, Caylee.

5. Parkway Church, Kosciusko, held a groundbreaking ceremony for a new fellowship hall and kitchen. Don Cook, pastor; Bill McKnight, Building and Ground committee chairman. Shown are the participants.

6. Liberty Church, Mississippi Association, ordained Will Newman Caston as deacon Aug. 15. Shown are Clay Caston, Caston, and pastor David Bishop.

7. HarvestPoint Church, Kosciusko, held their second annual back-to-school Bible club July 30 to target unchurched children in the community. Eighteen children from unchurched families attended. Shown are the participants.

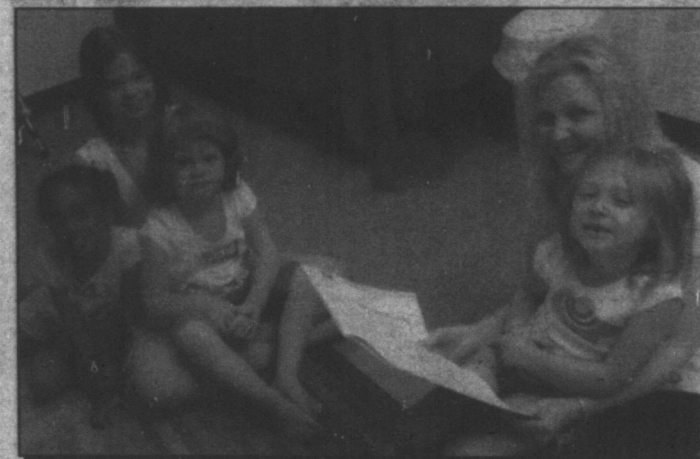
8. Liberty Hill Church, Pope, recently held a baby dedication. Shown are the participants with pastor Jay Anderson.



5. Parkway Church, Kosciusko



6. Caston ordination



7. HarvestPoint Church, Kosciusko



8. Liberty Hill Church, Pope

Poll: American voters have misgivings about abortion

WASHINGTON (BP) — Nearly half of the voters continue to believe it is too easy to obtain an abortion in the United States, according to a recent survey by Rasmussen Reports.

The poll, released Aug. 16, found 48% of American voters believe an abortion is too easily procured, while 23% think the degree of difficulty is about right and 14% feel it is too difficult. Fourteen percent are unsure.

The results were largely consistent with what Rasmussen has found for the last four years. In 2007, 45% said it was too easy to get an abortion. That poll, however, showed 22% thought it was too difficult, meaning the number of those adopting that viewpoint has fallen eight points.

In other findings in the telephone survey of likely voters conducted Aug. 11-12:

- 54% believe abortion is morally wrong most of the time. Women hold this belief more than men by 58-49%.

- 61% say abortion is at least somewhat significant in terms of how they will vote in November, and, of those, 33% believe it is very important.

- Pro-lifers are twice as likely as pro-choicers to say abortion is an issue that will be important in their vote this fall.

Meanwhile, Virginia's government can enforce stronger restrictions on abortion clinics in the state, Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli says.

Cuccinelli's legal analysis was a setback for abortion providers, but an advance for pro-lifers who have long sought to hold abortion clinics to standards they believe are required for a procedure that not only takes the lives of unborn babies but results in injury and death to an unknown number of women.

The opinion permits, but does not require, the state's Board of Health to issue regulations on abortion clinics that would be similar to those mandated for hospitals.

Responding to requests from two state senators, Cuccinelli, a Republican, concluded in his opinion that Virginia "has the authority to promulgate regulations for facilities in which first trimester abortions are performed as well as providers of first trimester abortions, so long as the regulations adhere to constitutional limitations."

Abortion providers expressed concern many of the state's clinics will be unable to afford the changes that could be required if the regulations outlined by Cuccinelli are enforced. NARAL Pro-choice Virginia said 17 of the state's 21 abortion clinics likely would close under such a scenario.

"These so called regulations are only an attempt to shut down abortion clinics" in Virginia, said Tarina Keene, NARAL Pro-choice Virginia's executive director, according to The Washington Post.

One of the senators who sought Cuccinelli's opinion,

Republican Sen. Ralph Smith of Roanoke, was quoted in The Post as saying the attorney general's guidance "clarifies any legal questions on the issue and sets the stage for regulating abortion clinics like other medical facilities."

Abortion clinics are regulated the same as offices for oral or plastic surgery, according to the newspaper. Pro-life members of the legislature have sought but failed to pass bills

for several years that would require abortion clinics to abide by mandates similar to those now placed on hospitals.

"The state has long regulated outpatient surgical facilities and personnel to ensure a certain level of protection for patients. There is no reason to hold facilities providing abortion services to any lesser standard for their patients," said Brian Gottstein, the attorney general's director of communications.

REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS



2. McCrory

1. **Daniel Memorial Church, Jackson**, will celebrate 75 years of ministry Oct. 3.
2. **New Home Church, Smith County**: 117th homecoming celebrated in August; featured Shane Singleton, speaker; home cooked dinner; personal testimony and song by Maxine and Quintenna Davis; and Heavenly Highway, music. Rhonda Stringer McCrory, shown, received a 50-year membership certificate.
3. **Unity Church, Magnolia**: 50th anniversary; Sept. 11, fish fry, 5 p.m., followed by sharing and special music; Sept. 12, service at Old Mission Church grounds, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds; Wayne Frederick, speaker.
4. **Lincoln Road Church, Hattiesburg**: Revival, Sept. 30 - Oct. 2; Sun., 10 a.m., followed by potluck lunch; 7 p.m. nightly; Grady Parker, speaker; Bob Thames, music.
5. **Oak Grove Church, Simpson County**: Revival, Sept. 15, 16, 17, 7 p.m.; Sept. 19, 11 a.m.; Bob Gladney, Chad Hunsburger, Jay Westbrook, and Don Lum, speakers; Bob Harris, music; Clarence Young, interim pastor.
6. **Mt. Carmel Church, Smith County**: Homecoming and cemetery day, Sept. 26; potluck lunch; love offering received.
7. **Elon Church, Macon**: Homecoming, Sept. 19; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Sterling Davis, speaker; Steve and Becky Carver, music.
8. **New Home Church, Fulton**: Revival, Sept. 26 - 29; Blue Mountain College men, speakers; Mike Warren, pastor.
9. **Long Creek Church, Meridian**: 125th anniversary, Sept. 12; worship, 10 a.m., followed by lunch and 1:30 p.m.; services continue through Sept. 15, 6 p.m. nightly; Leland Goodman, Albert Creel, Bob Alston, Ray Meadows, Robert Baker, and Marty Harper, speakers; Joel Hill, music; Jim Meadows, pastor.
10. **New Providence Church, Leake County**: Homecoming, Sept. 19; services, 10 a.m., followed by lunch and cemetery meeting; Dax Summerhill, speaker; Janice W. King and Pam W. Harris, music.
11. **Rawls Springs Church, Hattiesburg**: Revival, Sept. 19 - 22; Sun., 10 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., Noon, with light lunch, and 7 p.m.; Step Martin, speaker; Price Harris, music.
12. **New Providence Church, Hazlehurst**: Homecoming, Sept. 19; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; Brad Moak, speaker.
13. **Rocky Point Church, Leake Assoc.**: Revival; Sept. 12-15; Scott Vaughn (12), Randolph Scott (13), Dale Rogers (14), and Mark Mayo (15), speakers. Craig Stephens, music; Alan Peoples, interim pastor.

OBITUARY

William A. McWilliams, 69, of Magee passed away Aug. 21. Services were held Aug. 25 at Corinth Church, Magee, with burial at Coat Church cemetery. McWilliams was born May 12, 1941, in Simpson County to Earline and Wilson McWilliams. He pastored many churches in Mississippi. He is survived by his wife, Madonna Mercer McWilliams; children Lourie (Gene) Ramsey, William David (Amy) McWilliams, Richard "Ricky" (Susan) McWilliams, Jennifer (Trey) Howard, Sherri (Wesley) McInnis, Trudy (John) Hux, Randy (Brooke) McWilliams; grandchildren Chelsea & Ashley Ramsey, Kasey & "Sam" McWilliams, Candace & Faith McWilliams, Anna Howard, Hanna & Carly McInnis, Zack & Josh Hux; brothers, Charles Earl (Brenda) McWilliams, Donald Ray (Brenda) McWilliams, Larry (Kathy) McWilliams; sister, Pamela Parker; and a host of nieces, nephews, and friends.

CLASSIFIED ADS

YOUTH MINISTER NEEDED: PINE GROVE Baptist Church, Livingston, LA. Please contact our office for more information, or send cover letter and resume to: briansager@aetel.net. Deadline for submission is October 15, 2010.

TEACHING POSITION AVAILABLE AT Greenville Christian School. Full time Bible teacher for Secondary Grades. Position available immediately. Please send resumes to headmaster@gcssaints.com

DO YOU NEED A CHURCH PIANIST? We have piano CDs for churches to sing by! FREE DEMO! Hymns, Gospel, Christmas, Choruses, Praise - Hundreds of Songs! CALL Worship Service Resources 1-877-977-6800. Special Church Pricing! www.wsrpianocds.com.

BEAUTIFUL CONDO FOR RENT ON Okaloosa Island, Ft Walton Beach, Florida — 6 miles from Destin. Lots of amenities. As owner I can make your vacation affordable. Contact Lucy at 770-831-3651 or e-mail lucyclark9@aol.com

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH is currently accepting resumes through Oct. 29, 2010, for a full-time experienced Southern Baptist pastor. Mail resume to Calvary Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 740236, Tusculum, AL 35674.

GATLINBURG CABIN FOR RENT: 2 bd/2ba, full kitchen, great view of National Pk. \$95/night. 832-922-0401 / pdiaw4760@att.net

BETSY'S LIL' CABIN - \$250.00 PER week or \$60.00 per night. 601-940-6841 or 601-643-8817.

SEBREN'S SIDING, JACKSON, Christian owned. All home improvements, vinyl siding, windows, metal and shingle roofs, patio covers, screen and glass rooms. 601-992-2092, Don & Rita Sebrén, owners.

STAINED GLASSWORKS, INC., SERVING MS & AL since 1992. Call 800-605-2970

AFFORDABLE BEACHFRONT & BEACHSIDE VACATION CONDOS Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Alabama. Best value on the beach! Lowest Prices! Over 25 Top Quality Condos! Owned & Operated by Christian Family since 1988 205-556-0368 or 205-752-1231 www.gulfshorescondos.com

GET THE BEST RATES ON: Health Insurance and Medicare Supplements. Call 1-800-541-8196 or visit www.TurnerInsuranceOnline.com

STAINED GLASS: NEW WINDOWS and repairs. Hopper Stained Glass, Jackson, 601-502-0202.

CHURCH PEW UPHOLSTERY, FREE estimates. Davis Upholstery, Quitman, Miss., phone 601-776-6617.

BYRDLAND MINISTRIES NEAR Hattiesburg has recovered from Katrina and is much improved. It has a 700' Zip Line with a 70' drop in 400' with an over-water dismount, a 53' giant 2-person swing plus many other high elements. Contact us at 601-544-7407 or visit us on line at www.byrdlandministries.us

Nick Clark
CLARK AUCTIONS
11115
www.nickclarkauctions.com
REAL ESTATE BROKER • AUCTIONEER • APPRAISER

MS POSITIONS

GREEN'S CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH of Petal, MS is accepting resumes for a part-time minister of music and worship leader. The qualified candidate will be responsible for leading the music service for a city based Southern Baptist church and directing the growth of our music department. Please send resume to 711 Old Richton Road Petal, MS 39465.

WANTED: FULL TIME MIDDLE school youth pastor for Petal Harvey Baptist Church in Petal, MS. Send resume to Jason Wade @ 600 S. Main St., Petal, MS 39465 or e-mail to jason@petalharvey.org. Please submit resumes prior to Oct. 1, 2010.

STAFF POSITION AVAILABLE - Hillcrest Baptist Church, New Albany, Ms is accepting resumes for a Senior Pastor. Send to Rev. Trent Grubbs, Chairman, Pastor Search Committee, 216 Hwy 15 South, New Albany, Ms 38652.

INSTRUMENTALIST POSITIONS available at New Zion Baptist Church. Send resume by Sept. 15th, 2010, to NZBC 12023 New Zion Rd. Crystal Springs, MS 39059. PH# 601-892-1246. Email newzionb@gmail.com. Qualifications and duties available upon request.

WILLIAMSVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH Kosciusko, Ms is currently accepting resumes for full time Minister to Students. Please mail resumes to: Donnie Sims 16692 Hwy 19S Kosciusko, Ms 39090

FBC FLORA IS SEEKING A PART Time Children's Minister. Please send resumes to P.O. Box 163, Flora, MS 39071 Or E-mail to jcole@fbcflora.org

NEW ZION BAPTIST IS A RURAL Church of Braxton, MS, is accepting resumes for a full-time pastor, can be bi-vocational. Please send resumes to: New Zion Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, 275 Andrews Road, Braxton, MS 39044

SYLVA RENA BAPTIST CHURCH, Yalobush County, Ms, is seeking a full time Pastor. Please send resume to: Pastor Search Committee Chairman, 17846 Hwy 32, Water Valley, Ms. 38965.

Kentucky pastor is nominee for NAMB presidency

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP and local reports) — The presidential search committee of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) trustees has unanimously nominated Kevin Ezell, senior pastor of Louisville's Highview Church.

Trustees received word of the nomination on the evening of Aug. 31, in an e-mail from NAMB trustee chairman Tim Dowdy, pastor of Eagle's Landing First Church in McDonough, Ga.

Ezell, 48, is the immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference. He has led the multi-site Louisville congregation since 1996.

Highview Church counts among its members R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, and Russell D. Moore, a Biloxi native who serves as the seminary's dean of the School of Theology; senior vice-president for academic administration; and professor of Christian theology and ethics.

"Kevin... is a gifted preacher and teacher and a faithful ambassador of the Lord with a passion for reaching the lost and touching the world for Jesus Christ," Dowdy wrote to trustees.

The nomination is the culmination of a 10-month search that began in October 2009, with the appointment of a seven-member search committee after the resignation of Geoff Hammond.

NAMB's full trustee board membership will vote on Ezell's nomination at a special called meeting Sept. 14 at NAMB's headquarters in Alpharetta, Ga.

Dowdy praised the efforts of the search team and told trustees they will soon receive more information about Ezell, "but for



Ezell

now I want to make sure you know who will be presented so you could be in prayer for our meeting on September 14, 2010."

Information from the 2009 Annual Church Profile maintained by LifeWay Christian Resources lists 121 baptisms at Highview Church and primary worship service attendance of 3,260.

Highview Church gave \$140,100, or 2.23%, through the Cooperative Program from undesignated receipts of \$6,270,057. Its total missions expenditures of \$1,350,170 includes \$50,000 for the Lottie Moon Christian Offering for International Missions and \$10,000 for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions.

Ezell first sensed God's call to ministry when he was a high school sophomore. "My parents and pastor didn't really push me into it at the time," he recalls. "They believed that if it was a true calling of God, I would pursue it on my own."

That call was confirmed and solidified during his time as a student on a tennis scholarship at Union University in Jackson, Tenn. "I thought at the time that I would go into student ministry," Ezell says.

He had served in student ministry at First Church in Paducah, Ky. The church's pastor at the time, J. Robert White, serves today as executive director of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

With financial help from First Church, Ezell attended seminary at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth.

Ezell pastored First Church in Hartsville, Tenn., from early 1989 to 1991. He led First Church in Marion, Ill., from 1991-1996.

When Ezell came to Highview Church in 1996, the church met on a single campus and averaged 1,200 on Sunday mornings. Today, Highview consists of seven campuses, one that meets across the Ohio River in southern Indiana. Two of the campuses consist of Hispanic congregations. One meets on campus at the University of Louisville.

The church now averages more than 3,000 in worship.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

1. **Shiloh Church, Clay County:** July 26 - 30; average attendance, 125; two professions of faith. David Martin, children's minister; Johnny Hearn, pastor.
2. **Fellowship Church, State Line:** Average attendance, 15; last day of VBS was a water slide day; offering sent to Baptist Children's Village.



1. Shiloh Church, Clay County

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Tullos ordination



2. Sullivan ordination

1. **Daniel Memorial Church, Jackson,** recently ordained student pastor Nathan Tullos. He has served for five years and is a graduate student at the UMC Department of Microbiology. Shown are Tullos, pastor Lawrence Baylot, and Ivan Parke.
2. **Carmel Church, Lauderdale Association,** ordained Travis Sullivan, Sr., as deacon Aug. 29. Shown are pastor Joe Anderson, Sullivan, and Pat Sullivan.

CD or IRA Maturing?

Learn about a safe investment that beats low bank rates & avoid probate

Ask us about 7.5% Guaranteed Income Growth Rider

O'Mire Financial

1-800-844-3254

406 B Orchard Park Dr.
Ridgeland, MS 39157

Start your own business

Home/Internet based
Mia Bella Candles/Gifts/Beauty

The best candles on the market - wonderful income potential!

Visit www.naturesbestscents-team.com

and enter to win a free candle!



Carpenter Bus Sales

We Rent Buses!
15 to 41 Passenger Buses Available.

Exclusive provider by
LifeWay Church Bus Sales

800.370.6180 • carpenterbus.com

Holland America Line Cruise + Rose Parade Seats! Mexican Riviera Cruise

Plus... San Francisco - Big Sur Coastline - Hearst Castle
Exclusive Float Viewing - The Rose Parade - San Diego

15 Days Departs December 26, 2010 from \$1598*

Ask to be on the same bus with other Baptists!

Start in San Francisco for two nights with city tour. Travel south and visit Monterey, the 17 Mile Drive, and take California's scenic Highway One, along Big Sur. Tour the Hearst Castle and spend one night in the San Luis Obispo area. Visit the Danish Village of Solvang in route to Los Angeles. Take a city tour of Hollywood, Beverly Hills and L.A. plus enjoy an exclusive YMT, after public hours, up close, pre-parade float viewing. Talk to the artists and watch the finishing touches put on the floats, unencumbered by public crowds! On 12/31 have a free day or take an optional tour to the J. Paul Getty Museum and Reagan Library. On New Year's Day, you'll be taken to Pasadena for the Rose Parade with reserved grandstand seats. Board Holland's deluxe, state-of-the-art Oosterdam 1/2/10 in San Diego for a 6-night Mexican Riviera cruise to Puerto Vallarta, and Cabo San Lucas! Spend one day and night in San Diego with an included city tour before your flight home January 9. Add \$100 for outside or \$300 for balcony cabins! *Per pers., dbl. occ. Airfare is extra.

For Details & Itinerary, Call 7 Days a Week:

YMT Vacations 1-800-736-7300

America's Best Choice for Affordable Travel Since 1967!

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

The Case for God's Existence

Psalm 19:1-6; Acts 17:22-29; Hebrews 1:1-2

By Rick Henson

How do you know God is real? Ask a Christian and you will likely hear about his or her relationship with God. We know God is real because we spoke to Him this morning, and He often speaks to us. But how do we convince someone without a relationship with God of His existence?

Most people who do not believe in God do not consider themselves atheists but rather agnostics. They don't deny the existence of God outright, but they are unsure if one can know God. According to a Gallup Poll taken in 2008, about 94% of Americans believe in a higher power, with 78% believing in God and 15% in a universal spirit (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/109108/belief-god-far-lower-western-us.aspx>).

Even though our society is now more secular, a part of us

all still seeks something beyond ourselves, and wants to believe that God is real and personal. Voltaire wrote in the eighteenth century, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him."

We acquire knowledge four ways: experientially, deductively, empirically, and through revelation. Experiential knowledge comes from your personal experiences. You touch a hot stove and learn not to touch a hot stove. Deductive knowledge is taught to you. Someone teaches you about the danger of touching a hot stove or you learn from watching someone else touch a hot stove.

Empirical knowledge comes from the scientific method. Knowledge is derived from the scientific method by observation in a controlled environment, duplication of that environment and its results, and dis-



Henson

proof of the converse of that result. A scientist measures the amount of heat coming from a stove in a controlled environment, proves that one can be burned from that stove, and the burn could not have come from any other source.

The final way we learn is by revelation. The first three knowledge sources are limited to human observation and measurement. These types of knowledge constantly change, since they depend on our limited understanding of what we see, our experiences, and are influenced by our biases. Revelation comes from outside humanity, from God Himself, who never changes.

God reveals Himself to all people though what the theologians call general revelation. Psalm 19:1 reads, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork," (KJV). Romans 1:20 adds, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen,

being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse," (KJV). Nature, including how wonderfully we are made, all points to a Creator. This is general revelation.

God also reveals Himself through special revelation. Though all can see His handiwork in creation, none naturally knows how to meet God. 1 Corinthians 2:14 tells us the natural person cannot receive the things of God. So God revealed Himself to us in His word, both written and living.

God's written word is the Bible, composed over almost fifteen hundred years by about forty men, all from different times and circumstances. Isaiah was a prophet, Ezra was a priest, Matthew was a tax-collector, Peter and John were fishermen, Paul was a tentmaker, Moses was a shepherd, and Luke was a physician. The authors all wrote from different perspectives, yet they proclaimed the same one true God, and the same one way of salvation—Jesus Christ. 2 Timothy 3:16 teaches that God breathed

into each of these men who wrote as the Spirit of God led them. No other book has ever rivaled the inerrant Bible for influence and teaching, for training in righteousness, and for correction. No other collection of books has the continuity and focus of the Bible.

God's living word is Jesus Christ, God's own Son, according to John 3:16. John 1:1 describes Jesus as the living Word of God. Hebrews 1:2 teaches that God has, "in these last days spoken unto us by his Son," (KJV).

So how can a non-believer learn about this God and His special revelation? They can experience it themselves, observe it in others, or empirically attempt to measure the change in believers' lives. Ultimately, each must be open to God's general and special revelation.

How can you help a non-believer to be open to God's special revelation? Let others see Jesus in you, then tell them what they see.

Henson is pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE
God's Plan Involves Power

Ephesians 1: 15-23

By Melleen Moore

Most of us have experienced a two year old and the constant borages of questions. Especially "why", as if that were the only word he knew—an inquisitive mind or maybe to hear an answer. Although we may tire of hearing the constant why, why, why; the child is learning and using his power to get a response. Paul begins his prison prayer for the believers with an answer to "why".

Pray for Spiritual Insight
Ephesians 1:15-17

"This is why, since I heard..." (Ephesians 1:15, HCSB) Paul's answer to "why" was continuous prayer having heard of their faith in Jesus and their love for the saints. His prayer was one of thanksgiving for their witness and one of petition for gaining wisdom and revelation of knowledge. Paul specifically

prays for the Holy Spirit to grant insight from "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father" (Eph 1:17, HCSB) through the spirit. The Holy Spirit reveals truths from God's word enlightening the believer in wisdom and knowledge.

Expand Your Understanding
Ephesians 1: 18-19

Paul speaks of the eyes of the heart referring to the inner self of man. These eyes must be opened by the Spirit of God enabling man to understand spiritual things. Three specific understandings are mentioned—hope of His calling, riches of His inheritance and the greatness of His power. With the hope of His calling comes assurance of a future in Christ by serving in an earthly call of obedience and preparing for the second coming of Christ. Warren Wiersbe calls



Moore

this "living hope" as cited in 1 Peter 1: 3 "a new birth into a 'living hope' through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (HCSB). The second prayer for understanding is to know the riches of His inheritance. With this inheritance the

believer is assured of a glorious victory in Christ. We are His inheritance that one day He will call us unto Himself. Conceiving of the riches that are in Christ overwhelms my mind. That He would offer me salvation, continuous forgiveness, daily blessings, promises fulfilled and those to be fulfilled, and the hope of an eternal heavenly home. All these and much more are the riches of the believers' inheritance. The immeasurable greatness of His power is the third prayer petition for understanding. As a recipient of God's love, believers have within our grasp God's power. Many words have been used to describe God's power—dyna-

mitic, mighty, great, unlimited, and glorious are a few. Try as we might to put into words God's power, however it may seem impossible to describe. It comes in the form a personal revelation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Jesus spoke these words to the disciples in Acts 1:8 saying, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (HSCB). For the believer, the greatness of His power is assured in accordance with "the working of His vast strength" (Eph 1: 19, HSCB) His strength is source we need to carry the gospel to a dying world. His "living hope", His inheritance, His power and His strength are benefits to the believer.

Acknowledge God's Power
Ephesians 1:20-23

God gave us a vivid demonstration of His power by raising Jesus from the dead. Through this same power He continues today, to raise people from being dead in sin through sal-

vation. Jesus is "high and lifted up" sitting at God's right hand in the heavens. Jesus, the exalted son of God is "far above" all present rulers and authority and no future power can overcome Him.

Psalm 8:6 is quoted in verse 22 "He put everything under His feet" (HCSB). Literally meaning everything is under His authority. For us as believers, He is the head of the church and we are the body. The church being founded on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ was purchased with Christ blood. We can claim that relationship as a living connection in Christ. In acknowledging the power of God, Paul used terms that were common to the Jews suggesting a high ranking among angelic beings—principality, power, might and dominion. In our acknowledging of God's power, we accept by faith His son Jesus Christ as the power "far above" all which is the "why" of Christian living.

Moore is a member of Macedonia Church, Petal.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

THE BAPTIST
Record

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director

P.O. Box 27
Clinton, MS 39060-0027
(601) 922-2242

www.baptistchildrensvillage.com

GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor with taste and respect those who are and have been special to our special friends.

MEMORIALS

Mrs. Miriam Watts
Joann, Janelle and
Donnie Cook
Mr. & Mrs. Frank G.
Graham Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Norman
Jenkins
Ms. Ann E. Smith
Jack Wells
Mrs. Mary F. Ladner
Elsie White
Mr. & Mrs. S. S. Crocker
Minnie Wigley
Ms. Theresa Cook
Smithson Wigley
Ms. Theresa Cook
Carey Lynn Williams
Mrs. Gail Kirkland
Liberty BC
Maggie Williams
Mrs. Mary F. Ladner
Mrs. Birdie Wilson
Dr. & Mrs. Carl S.
Bozeman
Woodmen of the World,
Lodge 40
Mrs. Ruby Myrick Wilson
Mrs. Elizabeth C.
Wilson
Mr. & Mrs. Charles E.
Henderson
Mr. & Mrs. William H.
Allen
Ms. Rose M. Allen

HONORS

The Wells Family
Mr. & Mrs. Larry
Benson
Union Hill BC
Rev. & Mrs. William B.
Webb
Perry Atherton
Mrs. Virginia H.
Atherton
Brian & Stephanie Ball
Mr. & Mrs. John R.
Drennan

McKayla Gray Bodie
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Bodie
Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Hill
Mr. & Mrs. John R.
Drennan
Evelyn Talley
Robert T. Jeffries
Mrs. Ernest G. Thomas
Ms. Deanna B. Miller
Ms. Suzanne J.
Braddock
Ms. Joy Ann Hennessey
Ms. Judy F. Jordan
Mrs. Robert P.
McConnell
Ms. Linda L. Moss
Mary Wages
Adult B Ladies SSC,
Calvary BC Tupelo

MEMORIALS

Mrs. June Addy
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A.
Buchanan
Denver Lee Anding
Cecil Rhodes SSC, FBC,
Brookhaven
Greatest Generation
Coffee Club
G. M. "Billy" Anglin
Ms. Sammie B. Anglin
Bobbie J. Anthony
America General
Construction, Inc
Prime Timers of FBC,
Cuthbert
Siloam BC, Meadville
Carolyn Sartell Barkley
Mr. & Mrs. Frank O.
Crosthwait Jr.
Louis Bass
Mrs. Ida Mae Bridges
Mrs. Virginia Baxter
Harry Lott's SSC,
Holcomb BC
Mr. Eddie P. Beck
Brunini, Grantham,
Grower & Hewes LLC
Regal Wood
Homeowners
Association
Mr. & Mrs. Frank
Barron
Todd & Bobbie Horn

Steve & Cindy King
Jimmy & Sandra Helms
& Family
Jimmy & Jessie Helms
Brian Helms
Wallace & Helen
Johnson
Kimberly & Harry Tarsi
& Family
Lester & Bette
Herrington
Olive Branch SSC,
Hillcrest BC, Byram
Mrs. Percy Bell
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A.
Buchanan
Lena Mae Berry
J. W. & Gae Powell
Ray Berryman
Mr. & Mrs. Stanley
Downs
Charles Blansett
Mr. & Mrs. Richard A.
Pullen
Rick Bonner
Mr. & Mrs. James R.
Blair
Mrs. Bobbie Brignac
Marion G. Miller
Mr. James D. Brower
Mr. Mark Scobey
Leta Beth Brownlow
Hon. Barbara J. Beck
Mr. & Mrs. Raymond
Sanders
"Tom Girls" Miss Grp,
Carrollton BC
Lee Mattox, Fred T.
Neely & Co.
Stephen C. Anderson,
R. Ph.
Mr. & Mrs. W. D. Lord
Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Donald
Shelton
Mr. Robert G. Sherrell

Wilton Buie
Union Church BC
Sandra Burch
Charles & Mary Guy
SSC, FBC, Summit
Betsy Collins Burton
Mr. & Mrs. Walter A.
McCool
Mr. & Mrs. Carl F.
DeLoach
Mrs. Margie Calcote
Old Silver Creek BC
Mrs. Tommie Calhoun
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence A.
Gnemi
Boby Carney
Mr. & Mrs. Hubert T.
Kendrick
Benton Case
Ms. Carolyn J. Cox
Mrs. Charlotte Causey
Mrs. Marjorie Downing
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A.
Buchanan
Mrs. Nick (Kathryn "Dinni")
Clark
Myron and Lynn
Johnson
Bill, Beverly & Britton
Baker
Mr. & Mrs. R. N.
Humphreys
Mrs. Ruth Clay
Dot, Lucille & Joe
Taylor
Mrs. Lillian Cobb
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean
William S. Cockroft
Mr. & Mrs. Richard W.
Aiken
Betsy Collins
Mr. & Mrs. Jay Gore III
Tim Comstock
Mr. & Mrs. Bobby W.
Dye
Neville Conerly
Ms. Camille S. Conerly
Teresa Coulter
Sharon & Herman
Dungan
Mr. William Julius Crisler
Mrs. Mickey Moore
Mrs. Marion Dampeer
Rev. & Mrs. Allen H.
Mapp Jr.
Friley Davidson
Mr. & Mrs. John
England
Mr. Billy Davis
Mary SSC, FBC,
Columbia
Mrs. Elaine Dawson
Mr. Robert R. Waymire

Cecil DeGarmo
Dr. & Mrs. Harold
Ward
Mr. Bobby Dickerson
Mrs. Berniece O.
Wicker
Mona Kay James Dickey
Ms. June Collins
Mrs. Jeannine M. Dixon
Mr. & Mrs. Paul D.
Albritton
Ms. Brandi Prater
Mr. Scott Bohn
Ms. Grace M. Grubbs
Bill & Dianne Hathorn
& Family
Dr. & Mrs. Randy Rich
Mr. Leroy Douglas
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean
Bill & Seletta Dykes
M. E. "Sonny" Newton
Jr.
Margaret Newton
Craig Estes
East Louisville BC
Mary Evans
Mrs. Grover Kyle
Everett Ezell
Ms. Margaret H.
Durham
N. L. Ezell
Ms. Pam K. Tyler
Mike Fettes
Bill & Nell Gill
Jean Flemmons
Cyndi & Meredith
Owen
Jerry & Johnnie
Grissom
Mrs. Annette Freeman
Mr. & Mrs. Hembree
Brandon
James Kenneth "Ken" Fuller
Mr. & Mrs. Mike B.
Thompson
Serrano IT Services,
LLC
Mrs. Bess V. Simmons
Ms. Marie Honea
Mrs. Barbara Fuller
Ed and Pam Calvary
Baptis Spiers
George & Sheila
Morgan

Mary Catherine Fuller
Ken & Barbara Fuller
Mrs. Genevieve Gardner
Mr. Bobby C. Gardner
Ruth Gault
Mr. Don Evans
Mrs. Jane Baker Gibbons
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A.
Buchanan
Emmie Grant
Mr. & Mrs. Larry P.
Franklin
Rev. John C. Graves, Jr.
Mrs. Patsy Eames
Mr. & Mrs. David
Eames
Mr. & Mrs. Eugene L.
Culpepper
Mr. & Mrs. John T.
Mullins
Mrs. Sadie Gray
Ms. Alice M. Dominick
Alice Gullick
Mr. & Mrs. James C.
Brents Jr.
Eloise M. Hagwood
Lauderdale Co. Bapt.
Assoc.
Dusty Harrington
Mrs. Ida Mae Bridges
Sibyl Harrison
Benton & Marilyn
Espey
Lavon Hatten
Ms. Bonnie Thornton
Mr. Dave Hembree
Mark, Lance & Barbara
Ball
Mr. Del Hemphill
Ralph, Cheryl Leigh, &
Mary Lynn Perkins
Mr. & Mrs. David Doss
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Lee
Abb Henry
Mr. & Mrs. Alton G.
Milner
Elaine Herring
Mr. W. B. Herring Jr.
Mrs. Laverne Heslep
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean
Barbara Ann Hilderbrand
Otha Hilderbrand
Jesse Hitt
Mrs. Opal Vickers

John Earl Holbrook
Mr. & Mrs. William W.
McGraw
Jenny Hollimon
Mr. & Mrs. Charles E.
Blackwell
Mrs. Elmer E. (Georgia P.)
Holmes
Shirley Hills BC
Mr. & Mrs. Floyd E.
Fuqua Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Tommy
Goss
Mr. and Mrs. Richard
Hamlin
Mr. & Mrs. George D.
Henderson II
Mrs. Clara Faye Keith
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Keith
Mr. & Mrs. Charles
Morrow
Ms. Margie L. Prescott
Kim & Dale Ramsey
Mrs. O. H. Taylor
Mr. & Mrs. Seth Travis
Dr. & Mrs. Ben Folk
Louis L. & Dona B.
Holmes
Mrs. Mildred M.
Mahan
Beauvais S. McCaddon
Mr. & Mrs. Robert E.
Schaffner
Harry R. (Rusty)
Applegate
John W. Applegate
Joyce Applegate
Mrs. Mary Ellen
Leftwich
Annie Kate Burrell &
Girls
Ms. Donna Coker
Sherman & Twyla
Dixon
Mr. & Mrs. Greg
Edwards
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy
Hollingsworth
Ms. Neil W. Kent
Zoffia & Don Lindsey
Mr. & Mrs. Alvin
Prichard
Mr. Thomas F. Hall II
Kitty & Ed Kossman
Jim & Lisa Lytle
Mr. & Mrs. Wade
McCollum
Mr. Robert E. Stevens
Mrs. Berniece O.
Wicker
Mr. & Mrs. Hugh E.
Walker
Pauline Holmes
Ken & Barbara Fuller
Evelyn Hood
Mr. Larry Hood
Mr. C. D. Howard
Mr. & Mrs. James E.
Clark
Mr. & Mrs. J. V. Parker
Mrs. Joy B. Roberts

Marie Howard
Sharon & Herman
Dungan
Mrs. Maggie Hudson
Carl & Eunice Woolery
T.E.L. SSC, Springfield
BC
Lorraine Huff
Dungan Engineering
PA
Naiona Hundley
Mr. & Mrs. Jennings
Dixon
Bill Jackson
Mrs. W. L. Withen
Jonathan Jackson
Mr. & Mrs. Ernest L.
Scruggs
Mr. Keith James
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean
Bertha Johnson
Emp.-Amite Co.
Medical Svcs., Inc
Mrs. Dixie Johnston
Concord BC, McCall
Creek
Ronnie & Cheryl Case
Mr. & Mrs. Estes L.
Carwyle
Charles Jordan
Ms. Doris Armstrong
Bess Walker Katz
Mary Margaret & Fred
Tatum
Kenneth Keller
Joe Pat & Bobbie
Lannon
Lewis Kilgore
Mrs. Grover Kyle
Mr. and Mrs. Michael
W. Young
Rev. Don Kimbrough
Mrs. Ina A. Carmichael
Charles S. Lawler
Ms. Margie L. Prescott
Julie Lee
Mr. & Mrs. Tom
Coward Jr.
Mrs. Arlene Lofton
Ruth SSC, Juniper
Grove BC
Ms. Jean Saucier
C. E. Mangrum
Mr. & Mrs. Bill
Patterson
Don Manis
Mrs. Mildred Moore
Greg & Family
Skipper & Family
Marion Howard Marshall
Ms. Edith M. Aldridge
Gladys Martin
Ladies III SSC, Calvary
BC
Bro. David Matthews
Mashulaville BC
Mrs. Girtue Maxey
Mrs. Esther Stephens
Ina Brown Maxwell
James & Doris
Maxwell

The Baptist Children's Village

Celebrates the Opening of our New

Powell-Walley Campus

5579 Hwy 84

Waynesboro, Mississippi 39367

Please Join Us for our Open House

Sunday, September 12, 2010

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Korean couple putting aside bitterness to serve Christ

NAGOYA, Japan (BP) — Wang Lee, 80, and his wife Rose, 72, rarely agree on anything. From their modest home in Nagoya, Japan, where the two serve among the homeless, they argue playfully back and forth.

They disagree over the name of their church in the United States, which turns out to be Concord Korean Baptist Church in Martinez, Calif. They can't exactly agree on how old they each were at World War II's outset, when they were living as children in Korea under Japanese occupation. They even argue with smiles and laughter over Wang's age. Is he 79 or 80?

This Korean-American couple, married for 50-plus years, definitely agree on one thing: God leads His people when they seek Him in prayer.

"Wang and Rose prayerwalk more than anyone I know," said Linda Lee, an International Mission Board missionary in Nagoya who is no relation to Wang and Rose Lee. "They spend many hours a day in prayer."

Through prayer, in fact, the Lees overcame personal resentment toward the Japanese for the atrocities committed during the occupation of Korea from 1910-45.

"I had this feeling of resentment against the Japanese," Rose said. "I tried to fight against it, but the feeling kept coming. I noticed that I didn't have the resentment while we were praying."

While God's grace and forgiveness have removed any trace of bitterness, today, 65 years later, both the Lees still recall acts of violence committed against their friends and family during the years of Japanese occupation.

"I was in elementary school, and I walked by something like a small police station," Rose Lee recalled. "They were torturing people with hot water, that kind of thing."

"Stories, thousands of stories [from that time]," Wang Lee agreed. "They took away our natural resources. They were cruel to many young women and sent them to some bad places. They sent all our young people to Japan or to the war zone. They used young people — young Koreans — for labor forces. Everything was so bad."

"They came in my home and took all the valuable things," Rose Lee remembered.

"They sent my cousins to labor camps in Japan, all over China, the Philippines, and Taiwan," Wang Lee said.

They even changed Koreans' names. "My Japanese name was Ahara," Wang Lee said. "Mine was Aoki," Rose said.

World War II also was when Wang Lee came to know Christ through the testimony of an elder serving in a Presbyterian church in his city in what is now North Korea. The man's last name was Song. Early in his life, Wang Lee learned the power of prayer from Elder Song.

"Every time I went to Elder Song's house, he prayed for me," Lee said. "He put his hands on my head and prayed for me."

Later, during the Korean War, Elder Song prayed for Lee again, as Song and a U.S. Army chaplain helped Lee and other Christians escape North Korea during the U.S. Army's retreat to the south in 1951.

"Amazingly, Elder Song's prayers were answered," Wang Lee said. "I could have been killed so many times while I was escaping."

Rose Lee's story is slightly different. She grew up going to church in Korea with her mother, but she didn't become a Christian until after she moved to America in 1964. Challenges abounded: The young family had little money, and she couldn't speak English.

"It was very difficult... but God found me, and my faith started a little," Rose said.

It was that small seed of faith that took root in Rose Lee's heart and eventually led her to enroll in Golden Gate Seminary at the age of 62.

"I was the oldest student at the seminary," Rose Lee laughed, "but the other students helped carry my books."

Rose Lee studied Christian education and was challenged by stories of young people returning from short-term mission trips. Presentations from representatives of then-Foreign Mission Board (now IMB) also inspired her.

Eventually, through prayer, both Wang and Rose Lee felt God's call to serve overseas. Following his retirement from the banking industry, Wang Lee made a short-term trip to China, and Rose Lee made a short-term trip to Venezuela.



NEW MEN IN CHRIST — Wang Lee (foreground) and his wife Rose trained five Japanese men as house church leaders. Four of the five men were homeless when they met the Lees in a downtown park in Nagoya, Japan. Here the men read Scripture as they prepare to share communion. By Japanese custom, the men are known only by their last names: (left to right) Nishi, Kawagoe, Shimizu, Yamanaka and Fuji. (BP photo)

After those trips, the two decided to apply for service through the mission board. The question was where to serve. "As we prayed, we kept hearing in our spirits, 'Love your enemy; [get past] the resentment. [Love] the Japanese people,'" Rose Lee said.

Although they considered various places, when the time came to make a decision the Lees listed Japan as both their first and second choices. That was 2004.

On their arrival in Nagoya, the Lees embraced the Japanese people and sought daily opportunities to share their faith with their neighbors and others they encountered each day.

"I could write a book about them," said fellow missionary Hank Lee, Linda Lee's husband and an IMB strategist. "They explored and stretched the boundaries of front line work in a place where some say, 'It can't be done.'"

They also prayed continuously for the Japanese. "We have a habit of waking up early every morning... we always pray at 5:30 a.m.," Rose Lee said.

"There is a mountain near our home,

and we go up there every day and pray for the Japanese," Wang Lee added.

As a result, when God opened a door to serve among Nagoya's homeless, the Lees eagerly stepped through it. As a result, they have seen many come to faith in Christ, and they have trained five leaders among the homeless to continue the work when the Lees retire later this year and return to the United States.

"They are going to be good leaders," Wang Lee said. "They know how to baptize. They know how to [share] the Lord's Supper. They know [how to lead] Bible study. They know everything now."

Of course, Wang and Rose also know that God isn't finished with them. Once the Lees are settled in the U.S., Rose hopes to invite Japanese students she has met in Nagoya to live in her home while they attend American universities. Wang hopes to get to know Japanese students studying at a junior college near their home in California.

Certainly, wherever God leads them, the Lees will seek His direction through prayer.

Prayer emphasis aims to recognize 'transcendent moral authority'

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — There's no disputing that most Americans "believe" in God. Studies by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life consistently reveal over two-thirds of Americans are "absolutely certain" there is a God.

The problem, Richard Land says, is that people often live as though there is no transcendent moral authority. In considering the state of the culture, Land observes that "believing" in God apparently doesn't equate to a person's wholesale adoption of God's precepts into his or her life.

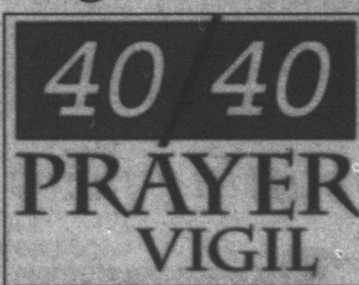
"Instead of influencing the culture, it appears on most fronts the culture is influencing us. Too often, instead of being 'salt' and 'light,' we are being salted and lit by the secular culture around us," said Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in

Nashville, focusing on a theme he often raises when preaching.

"Our churches are in need of a truly spiritual revival, and our nation is in need of a great movement of God's Spirit," Land said, noting that this need was the impetus behind the development of the 40/40 Prayer Vigil for Spiritual Revival and National Renewal, which debuted in 2008 in partnership with the North American Mission Board.

"To change lives we must first be changed," Land said. "We must pray for and experience spiritual regeneration, then recognize and accept our responsibilities as Christians to be 'salt' and 'light' in the culture," he said, referencing Matthew 5:13-16.

A great movement of the Holy Spirit will not happen without sustained prayer from God's people, Land added.



The 40/40 Prayer Vigil is designed for people to pray for 40 days, between Sept. 20 and the morning of Oct. 29, and then pray for 40 hours between 4 p.m. on Oct. 29 and 8 a.m. on Oct. 31. A downloadable prayer guide and more information is available at www.4040prayer.com.

The 40/40 prayer guide is written so that it can be used by an individual, a small group, or the focus of an entire church

body. The vigil focuses on personal and church revival and national renewal, Land said, noting participants are encouraged to heed the truths of 1 Timothy 2 and pray for those in positions of authority in the government.

A pitched spiritual battle rages across the country and around the world, Land said. "Such warfare must be met first of all with spiritual weapons," he said. "We must pray for a great outpouring of God's Spirit on our homes, our churches and ourselves that our moral foundation might be recovered."

Additional tools to encourage participation in the prayer vigil, including an automatic e-mail delivery of each day's prayer outline, are expected to come online soon, Land said. The 40/40 website also includes a prayer guide translated into Spanish.

The Scriptures are at the heart of this call to prayer, Land said, noting that with each day's prayer points there is a listing of key Bible verses. "God draws close to those who call out to Him," Land said, paraphrasing Psalm 145:18.

"It is God's way or no way. And right now our nation and many of our families are heading in every way but after God," Land said.

"When our perspective is right, when we are on our knees, when we are obedient, God will use us — His people — for His purposes in our families, our churches and our land," he said, adding, "That is my prayer for the 40/40 Prayer Vigil—that believers will be renewed and those who don't know Christ will find him."

"Our country will never be the same when that happens."